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Lebanon needs a real third party, not another version of the current ones

By The Daily Star

Monday, February 09, 2009

Editorial

Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Butros Sfeir's comments on electoral matters have initiated another helping of the regurgitated gruel that passes for political debate in Lebanon. The particulars of what he had to say are less important, though, than the fact that his comments indicate something of a surge in support for the idea of a third party that would defuse tensions between the March 8 and March 14 lineups - and perhaps even displace them.

The notion is a pleasing one, and privately officials from both sides acknowledge that their own studies indicate considerable disaffection from within their respective ranks. But a third party must be more than the combination of a few chips off the same old blocs gathered under the wing of a godfather like Metn MP Michel Murr: The last thing Lebanon needs is another squirming mass of politicians with nothing new to offer the public in terms of well-defined policy proposals. To be sure, we need sustainable consensus positions on defense in general, and on stances regarding Israel and Syria in particular. Crucial to the long-term success of any such endeavors, however, will be the formulation and implementation of domestic policies that forge healthier relationships between the citizen and the state.

To be worth the effort, any third party will have to stress specific priorities that so many Lebanese have recognized for years but which their political representatives have enthusiastically avoided. Sweeping reforms are required to make Lebanon viable in the 21st century if it is to avoid reprises of the crises that plagued it in the 20th. A third party, therefore, should be built on bold ideas to finally rid this country of the slow but steady fratricide known as sectarianism. In addition, it must devise methods of fighting the culture of corruption that has infected the public sector for decades. To make any of this worthwhile, it will need to make the independence of the judiciary something more than a slogan. And for any of it to be possible, the electoral machinery needs to be retooled for proportional representation: Will people like Sfeir and Murr put their money where their mouths are on this score?

In short, offering the Lebanese voter a real alternative to the two choices currently available means going far beyond appearances. The necessary changes are ones of substance, not style. The coming months will reveal whether the country's political class is up to the task.

Live Coverage 2-09-2009 8:15pm LBC blamed former Interior Minister Hassan Sabaa and his successor Ziad Baroud for not preventing a sacked security employee from entering its premises in Adma.

7:42pm a minor earth quake reported in Zahleh. No Damaage or casualties were reported.

5:30pm President Michel Suleiman arrived in Manama and was received at the airport by King Hamad bin Issa al-Khalifa of Bahrain.

1:32pm President Michel Suleiman traveled to Bahrain where he will meet with several officials.

1:30pm MP Elias Atallah after meeting Patriarch Sfeir in Bkirki: When Sfeir asks the Christians to put their differences within standards this means he is aware that things could go out of control.

11:00am Hizbullah announced that it would hold a series of events to commemorate the assassination anniversary of Sayyed Abbas Moussawi, Sheikh Ragheb Harb and Hizbullah military commander Imad Mughniyeh.

10:38am Bishop Matar: We do not have the right to create everyday a new nation at our whim.

10:37am Matar: National unity is the only way to protect Lebanon.

10:36am Matar: We have to protect Lebanon and carry out this obligation through unity.

10:35am Bishop Matar: Our only concern for the elections is that they take place in a civilized manner.

10:30am Bishop Boulos Matar during St. Maroun day sermon: Let us all work for a united Lebanon.

10:00am St. Maroun day mass began at St. Maroun church in Gemmayze in the presence of President Michel Suleiman and his wife, Speaker Nabih Berri, PM Fouad Saniora and other top officials.

9:35am Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir during St. Maroun day mass in Bkirki: Every time Maronites differ differences backfire.

8:35am: MP Nabil Nicola denied that he has said Free Patriotic Movement leader Gen. Michel Aoun won't participate in the St. Maroun mass.

8:30am Environment Minister Tony Karam to VDL: Wiretapping is sometimes a security necessity but Telecommunications Minister Jebran Bassil can't act on his own by revealing or withholding some information.

7:45am MP Mustafa Allouch to VDL: I received information that I could be targeted by Fatah al-Islam.

Monday YaLibnan/NNA.GOV.LB

17:50 Former MP Ghattas Houry said the "Minister of Communications can not act as if he is not accountable or responsible in the case of eavesdropping." He added: "We are complaining about eavesdropping by an organization that has fixed and mobile network and this is the fundamental problem in the country." In reference to Hezbollah's illegal network

17:42 Iranian speaker Larjani: The west has to recognize Iran's regional role

17:30 President Michel Suleiman arrived in Manama and was received at the airport by King Hamad bin Issa al-Khalifa of Bahrain.

17:30 Jihad el Islami: The truce negotiations have reached a dead end , since the blockade continues and the crossings still closed

16:50 Chamoun : there is a party that wants to impose its own ideas by force

16:21 Minister Hariri calls for widest possible participation in February 14 demonstration to mark the 4th anniversary of the assassination of former PM Rafik Hariri

15:20 Minister Abu Faour: The decision of PSP leader Walid Jumblatt to withdraw his delegate from the defense strategy committee "was not directed against the president." He saved his best comment for March 8 leaders " I say to those that are defending the army now where were you when the army heroically fought at Nahr al-Bared...back then you stood with Fatah al Islam against the army "

15:15 Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak says long-term truce in Gaza possible by next week

13:44 Grand Mufti Qabbani, called patriarch sfeir to congratulate him on the occasion of St Maroun day and to discuss the situation in the country

13:32 President Michel Suleiman left for Bahrain on an official visit where he will meet with several key officials.

13:30 MP Elias Atallah after meeting Patriarch Sfeir in Bkirki: When Sfeir asks the Christians to put their differences within standards this means he is aware that things could go out of control.

13:16 A hand grenade that was set to explode was found inside a car in the Marj el Shaabi market in Western Beqaa. The Lebanese security arrived at the scene and took the necessary actions and started the investigation

11:00 Hezbollah announced that it would hold a series of events to commemorate the assassination anniversary of Sayyed Abbas Moussawi, Sheikh Ragheb Harb and Hezbollah military commander Imad Mughniyeh.

10:39 MP Elias Atallah defended Sfeir against accusations. He also defended Jumblatt : "Jumblatt had not attacked the Lebanese army, but had objected to some of its strategies." He said

10:38 Bishop Boulos Matar during St. Maroun day sermon: Let us all work for a united Lebanon, it is the only way to protect Lebanon. We do not have the right to create everyday a new nation at our whim. Lets hope the elections will be civil

10:14 As-Safir : MP Ibrahim Kanaan slammed "MP Walid Jumblatt's campaign against the army "

10:00 St. Maroun day mass began at St. Maroun church in Gemmayze in the presence of President Michel Suleiman and his wife, Speaker Nabih Berri, PM Fouad Saniora and other top officials.

9:21 Sfeir warns against divisions among Maronites because "history proves that when we were divided, we were conquered and defeated by the greedy [who seek to take our place]."

9:10 VOL: MP Saad defends Jumblatt for criticizing army . "I believe his message was misunderstood… Jumblatt's talk was merely a critique of "specific" issues."

8:35 : MP Nabil Nicola denied that he has said Free Patriotic Movement leader Gen. Michel Aoun won't participate in the St. Maroun mass.

8:30 Environment Minister Tony Karam told VOL: Wiretapping is sometimes a security necessity but Telecommunications Minister Jebran Bassil can't act on his own by revealing or withholding some information.

7:42 MP Mustafa Allouch said all necessary precautions taken to ensure the safety of March 14 MPs

4:57 Al Markaziyah : The Russian Minister of Defense will visit Lebanon in mid March to discuss with the Lebanese officials the details of the Russian grant of 10 Mig 29

4:47 Turkish president Gul briefs Assad on his Saudi trip

4:27 Iraqi PM Maliki : The Iraqi elections sets a good example to be followed in the region

1:37 Deputy Speaker Makari told el Seyassah: Hezbollah and some embassies practice eavesdropping and this is a challenge to Lebanon

1:13 Al Jazeera : Israeli raid on the security complex in Khan Younes (Gaza)0:28 Hamas leaders inside Gaza and outside are formulating a unified response to the truce issue

1:10 The Iranian Parliament member Darius Qanbari is claiming that Bahrain is part of Iran and if a poll is conducted in Bahrain , the people of Bahrain would vote to become part of Iran. He also attacked the UAE and accused it of fabricating documents that show the three island are occupied by Iran. Iran is feared by the Gulf nations as an expansionist state, because in addition to the 3 UAE islands it also occupies Arabstan which is the Ahwazi Arab province

that contains most of the Iranian oil

0:25 sarkozy's popularity has come down because of the economic crises

0:14 Olmert is discussing with Livni and Barak the truce issue and the freeing of Shalit

Live Coverage 2-08-2009 8:05pm Jumblat said after the talks with Saniora that his representative to the defense strategy committee was withdrawn to avoid taking part in the "counterfeit party."

6:40pm Democratic Gathering leader Walid Jumblat meets Premier Fouad Saniora.

1:30 pm: Maronites in Kuwait celebrated St. Maroun's Day in a mass that included Lebanon's ambassador Bassam al-Numani.

11:40am MP Nabil Nicola to ANB TV: The Free Patriotic Movement has not yet settled its electoral lists. These lists must remain closed to serve our political project.

11:20am: MP Abbas Hashim to NBN TV: If Aoun does not participate at St. Maroun's mass on Monday, his decision was adopted prior to the Maronite Patriarch's said statements.

11:00am: Deputy Prime Minister Abu Jamra to al-Manar TV: Demanding jurisdictional powers for my office does not take away anything from the Sunni sect. How can I receive a salary and my post as Deputy PM lacks power.

10:51am: Free Lebanon Radio: Maronite Patriarch Sfeir is currently meeting with Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea, Sfeir also met with Army Commander Jean Qahwaji for 30 minutes prior to Sunday's mass at Bkirki.

9:50am: National Coalition leader Carlos Eddeh to VDL: We used to back Hizbullah on the basis of resistance. However, we found out that things have changed when it used its arms internally. In time Hizbullah became larger than the state.

Sunday YaLibnan/NNA.GOV.LB

23:49 Iran declares its readiness for dialogue with the US without any preconditions

23:42 Muntathar el Zaidi , the Iraqi journalist that hurled shoes at former US president Bush will be tried on Feb 19

21:44 Berri's Amal Movement responds to Minister Shatah: The minister that declares that the presence of the opposition in the government is to block its decisions should resign immediately

21:30 MP Samir Franjyeh criticized General Aoun and former PM Omar Karami for attacking patriarch Sfeir's criticism of March 8, "People should not preach something and do something else" he said , in reference to criticizing the patriarch for getting involved in politics . He added "after all the March 8th leader (Hassan Nasrallah) is a religious cleric

20:21 Justice Minister Najjar told LBC: I am for implementation of law no 140 and opposed to any obstacles against the work of the international investigation commission and any acts that could endanger our nation

20:10 Minister Shatah told LBC: If the opposition wins the upcoming election It will be better if it forms a government on its own , because the government of national unity is not working

20:05 Jumblat said after meeting with PM Siniora that his representative to the defense strategy committee was withdrawn to avoid taking part in the "counterfeit party."

19:29 MP Walid Jumblatt accompanied by MP Marwan Hamadeh and Minister Ghazi Aridi visited MP Saad Hariri and plan to meet PM Fouad Siniora at the Grand Serail

18:20 Mohammad Suleimani , Minister of communications and Information technology was quoted by Iranian News agencies as saying : " Our experts are building 4 new satellites and will let you know as soon as we plan to launch them " he promised to provide the technical details of the satellites as soon as they are made

17:42 Future TV: Two Palestinians killed and 10 wounded in Israeli raid on central Gaza

17:40 Ivanov : Washington is sending strong signals about its desire for return to dialogue

17:17 Future TV : Khatami will declare today that he will be a candidate in the presidential elections

16:33 MP Harb: for strong participation in the March 14 alliance and in the elections calling the elections a battle of principles and not personalities

15:44 Kataeb party sources: a meeting was held this morning between representatives of Gemayel and Murr to arrange for a meeting between the 2 leaders to discuss political and electoral alliance

15:48 Hamas delegation will return to Cairo today to discuss the Israeli response

14:51 Israel raises its state of alert along the border with Lebanon

14:41 MP Antoine Zahra responds to Karami for criticizing Sfeir: How come you accept statements by Hassan Nasrallah and others who issue political statements that are not in the interest of the country and yet you criticize the statements by the one religious symbol whose only interest is the welfare of the country and its people.

14:22 Edde we always thought that the Iranian project for an Islamic state in Lebanon could never be implemented , but when Hezbollah started using internally its weapons against the Lebanese the situation changed

13:30 : Maronites in Kuwait celebrated St. Maroun's Day in a mass that included Lebanon's ambassador Bassam al-Numani.

12:30 Geagea said he supports MP Walid Jumblatt's concerns regarding the performance of Lebanon's military institutions. He also criticized the reaction of March 8, saying "they remembered to support the army when Jumblatt raised some questions, but forgot it when the issue is connected with decisions of war and peace, illegal weapons and Palestinian arms outside the refugee camps."

11:40 MP Nabil Nicola told ANB TV: The Free Patriotic Movement has not yet finalized its electoral lists. These lists must remain closed to serve our political project.

11:37 MP Atef Majdalani told ANB TV: those who carry weapons are obstructing state institutions' work. He added Aoun said a few days after the May 7 events that the "train was now on the right track", which means he approved of the incidents.

11:00 MP Abbas Hashim told NBN TV: "If Aoun does not participate in the mass, I affirm that the decision was taken before the inaccurate talk quoting Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir,"

10:51 : Free Lebanon Radio: Maronite Patriarch Sfeir is currently meeting with Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea.

10:37 Deputy Prime Minister Abu Jamra to al-Manar TV: Demanding jurisdictional powers for my office does not take away anything from the Sunni sect. How can I receive a salary and my post as Deputy PM lacks power. Called on Jumblatt to submit evidence of wiretapping to relevant authorities

10:08 Patriarch Sfeir and Army Commander Kahwaji hold close meeting before Sunday prayers in Bkirki

9:50 : National Coalition leader Carlos Eddeh told VOL: Hezbollah became larger than the state with the Iranian aid.

Accused Michel Aoun of being contradictory for changing his mind about Syrian involvement in former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri's assassination and accused him of scaring his people . Criticized Jumblatt's alliance with Berri in Hasbaya and said he can be either with March 14 or Berri

09:45 Patriarch Sfeir says during Sunday prayers that he hopes Lebanon will peacefully overcome the phase before the parliamentary elections

08:50 An Nahar : MP Walid Jumblatt has suspended his participation at the Strategic Defense Committee. His representative at the committee, Sharif Fayyad, will no longer participate in committee meetings. This was reportedly in response to Elias Murr's actions with regards to wiretapping

08:13 Palestinians fire a rocket from Gaza into Niram kibbutz near the city of Sderot in southern Israel causing no injuries

Live Coverage 2-07-2009

Saturday YaLibnan/NNA.GOV.LB

22:53 Egyptian Foreign Ministry spokesman Hussam zaki said a truce agreement between Hamas and Israel is expected to be signed within the coming days

22:50 AL chief Amr Moussa will start a new round of visits to the Arab countries to try and clear the air

22:24 Israeli leaders are discussing with Gilad the results of his trip to Cairo and his negotiations

22:08 Andraous : The Syrian regime is involved in forming all the March 8 electoral lists for the upcoming parliamentary elections

21:52 Salam Fayad , Palestinian PM said the UN aid could be delivered thru the Palestinian authorities to Gaza

21:30 Forty prisoners at Roumiah prison performed today the "Twelve Angry Men" play at the prison. The play was directed by Zeina Daccache who adapted the book by US author Reginald Rose, for local conditions. This is the first time ever such an action has been undertaken in Lebanon or the entire Middle East

20:52 Abi Najm : Never in the history of the Lebanese Christian community has anybody attacked the church like Aoun and Franjeh have done

20:16 The Iraqi army uncovers an AlQaeda cell and kills 18 of its members

20:01 a delegation from the European parliament visits Lebanon and meets with parliament majority leader Saad Hariri and minister Nassib Lahoud

19:49 Israeli gunboats fire in the direction of Beit Lahia in Gaza

19:36 US VP Biden: If Iran does not responded positively to the incentives, then its only alternative is isolation

19:25 Meshaal confirms that there can only be a truce after the blockade is ended and the crossings are opened

18:58 A UN committee has declared that the Iranian ship anchored in Limassol, South Cyprus has violated UN resolutions because it transported Iranian made weapons a Cypriot official said. The UN banned the export of arms by Iran. The arms were reportedly destined for Hamas in Gaza. The Cypriot official added the return the shipment to Iran is an impossible option and that most probably Cyprus will confiscate all the arms"

18:57 The Iraqi parliament postpones the election of a new speaker

17:55 MP Boutros harb: We tried the "great" Unity Government concept and it proved a "great" failure. Harb urged his followers to participate fully in the February 14 demonstration commemorating the 4th anniversary of the assassination of Lebanon's former PM Hariri

17:23 US VP Joe Biden: The establishment of 2 states (Israel and Palestine) Has been delayed but we are committed to defeating the extremists and achieve this solution

15:40 Iran's Ambassador to Lebanon Mohamad Reza Shibani informed President Michel Suleiman of contacts he had held regarding the fate of the four Iranians missing in Lebanon.

13:50 The army command has requested the media to refer to it before publishing any statistics about the victims of the "mines"

13:48 Al-Arabiya reports armed men called on its Gaza correspondent to leave the Strip immediately

13:45 After 30 years of dominance Lebanon may not remain a hostage of the regional interests the at its own expense (In reference to Syria's occupation of Lebanon and its continued use of Lebanon to achieve its own goals and to appease

Iran)

12:19 Wahhab told OTV : "The Special Tribunal will not be able to drag anyone from their home... Jumblatt was aiming to create disunity within the army ... The permanent settlement of Palestinians in Lebanon is forbidden, Division is forbidden, attacking the Resistance is forbidden... Arslan made a mistake when he decided to forge relations with Jumblatt alone

12:14 Iraq PM Maliki sees his victory in the elections as a proof of Iraqi progress

11:53 Telecommunications Minister Gebran Bassil told LBC: I don't deny that I restricted information in the wiretapping case but all he aimed to achieve was the implementation of the law

10:55 FPM's MP Salim Aoun told NBN TV that his bloc regretted that Sfeir had not remained neutral.

10:40 MP Ammar Hourri told LBC TV: Parliament's will is stronger than the decisions of Speaker Nabih Berri.

March 14 MPs were determined to call for the formation of an investigating commission into wiretapping

10:14 MP Musbah Ahdab told LBC TV that he rejects wiretapping that infringes on privacy, but accepts it if it is necessary for security. Tripoli supports Hariri's path and refuses to go backwards

09:53 MP Ismael Succariyeh told Free Lebanon radio: "Everyone knows that wiretapping has occurred in Lebanon for a long time ... Hezbollah's telecommunications network must be protected from Israel"

09:33 Interior Minister Ziad Baroud told VOL: Accusations will not solve the wiretapping issue and will nowhere. Refused to comment on Sfeir's interview with al-Masira magazine before Bkirki issues clarifications

09:03 Minister Jean Oghassabian told Free Lebanon Radio: Some parties are hindering the government's work . Inclusion of March 8 in a unity government was a failure

08:55 Sakozy : I will not be running for another term in the next elections

07:17 President Suleiman is planning to leave on an official visit Monday to Bahrain and the UAE

05:54 Berri confirmed to president Suleiman that he is insisting on the inclusion of 60 billion LL in the budget for the Council of the South. The president contacted Berri to cooperate on the approval of the budget. The March 14 majority is accusing Berri of wanting the funds for his electoral campaign

Live Coverage 2-06-2009 8:00pm: MP Michel Aoun to al-Manar TV: Promoting the idea that Israel would strike Lebanon if the opposition wins the legislative elections is a strategic error.

6:20pm: Phalange Party Head Amin Gemayel returned to Beirut following an official visit to Italy and the Vatican.

5:30pm: President Suleiman addressing Military Command: Three dangers threaten Lebanon- Israel, Lebanese divisions and terrorism.

4:20pm: New Middle East Airlines received its second new addition of Airbus 330-200 aircraft, the first MEA aircraft to be registered in Lebanon in 30 years under the name of ODMEA

4:15pm: Judge Saeed Mirza charged 33 individuals (24 under arrest and 5 escapees including Abdel Ghani Jowhar) members of the Fatah al Islam for their role in the bomb attack at al Buhasas.

1:30pm Arslan: We have full confidence in the army commander. The military should not be dragged into domestic political disputes.

1:25pm Arslan: The alliance between Berri and Jumblat in Marjayoun does not commit us to anything.

1:20pm Arslan: My allies and I will run as part of a unified list and we call for an honorable competition.

1:15pm Arslan: I told Jumblat that the opposition will run as part of a unified list in Aley. Trading seats in Baabda or elsewhere is out of the question.

1:00pm Cabinet Minister Talal Arslan during a press conference: Talal Arslan does not beg for a parliamentary seat from anyone.

12:50pm One person was killed and four others were wounded in a traffic accident on the main road of Nabatiyeh-Hboush.

11:05am U.S. Ambassador Michele Sison met with Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir in Bkirki.

10:30am MP Ghazi Youssef to LBC: I hold Telecommunications Minister Jebran Bassil responsible for any deterioration in case he withholds information from security apparatuses.

9:15am A member of the demining team Mine Action Group (MAG) was wounded in the town of Yohmor Shqif from a cluster bomb left over from the Israel-Hizbullah war in 2006.

9:10am PM Fouad Saniora is meeting with Druze leader Walid Jumblat at the Grand Serail.

8:30am MP Butros Harb to VDL: All political and security officials should be held accountable for their actions in the wiretapping case.

8:00am Minister Wael Abou Faour to VDL: I don't think a solution would be found to the wiretapping issue. It is no longer known who is bugging phone calls and who has the most advanced equipment.

Friday YaLibnan/NNA.GOV.LB

20:00 Aoun: FPM, Hezbollah agree on same basic principles

19:53 Hezbollah to retaliate Mugniyah assassination and the retaliation would be of surprise to the Israeli

15:57 UN agency halts aid to Gaza after Hamas seizes supplies

13:30 Minister Talal Arslan said during a press conference in response to Jumblatt's interview last night: Talal Arslan does not beg for a parliamentary seat from anyone. We have full confidence in the army commander. The military should not be dragged into domestic political disputes. The alliance between Berri and Jumblatt in Marjayoun does not commit us to anything. My allies and I will run as part of a unified list Trading seats in Baabda or elsewhere is out of the question.

12:50 One person was killed and four others were wounded in a traffic accident on the main road of Nabatiyeh-Hboush.

11:50 Hezbollah MP Ali Ammar told OTV: I have no knowledge of MP Walid Jumblatt's claim on Thursday that an agreement with Speaker Nabih Berri [was struck] over a parliamentary seat in West Bekaa for Minister of State Wael Abu Faour.

11:40 Telecommunications Minister Gebran Bassil told New TV: Walid Jumblatt is the first in line in the Lebanese-Syria security service, and we made it clear that Officer Daniel Fares does not deal with wiretapping [in the ministry].

11:28 Future Movement MP Hadi Hobeich spoke to New TV Friday criticizing Telecommunications Minister Gebran Bassil and accusing him of facilitating the assassinations of March 14 alliance members

11:20 Hashem says Bassil was convicted 'of implementing laws'

11:12 Youth and Sports Minister Talal Arslan is to hold press conference at 1 p.m. in Khaldeh

11:05 U.S. Ambassador Michele Sison met with Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir in Bkirki.

10:30 MP Ghazi Youssef to LBC: I hold Telecommunications Minister Jebran Bassil responsible for any deterioration in case he withholds information from security apparatuses.

10:12 Passengers on Brotherhood Ship expelled

10:03 UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon arrives in Baghdad on a surprise visit, meets with Iraqi President Jalal Talbani

9:15 A member of the demining team Mine Action Group (MAG) was wounded in the town of Yohmor Shqif from a cluster bomb left over from the Israel-Hezbollah war in 2006.

9:10 PM Fouad Saniora is meeting with Druze leader Walid Jumblat at the Grand Serail.

08:40 Harb says UNIIIC did not receive necessary information from Telecom Ministry. political and security officials should be held accountable for their actions in the wiretapping case

08:40 Abu Faour says wiretapping is rampant.

2:49 french president Sarkozy intends to visit Kuwait next week

2:43 al Arabiya: the Israeli authorities have damaged the Brotherhood Ship after confiscating it

2:42 al Arabiya: The Lebanese authorities will question the returning passengers and crew about Israeli handling of 'Brotherhood Ship'

2:33 al Arabiya: eight of the 'Brotherhood Ship' passengers were handed over to the Syrian authorities in the Golan . No explanation why Israel is involving the Syrians in a strictly Lebanese issue

2:26 new TV : the cars that are transporting the Lebanese 'Brotherhood Ship' passengers from Gaza to Lebanon arrived in Naqoura

Sfeir Warns Against Maronite Split Fatah: Hamas Arming Up in Lebanon Camps Hizbullah Criticizes Frenzy Attacks on Aoun Qassem: Arabs have No Choice in Confronting Israel Except Through Resistance Alloush: Reports of Possible Assassination Attempts Are Real AMAL Demands Resignation of Finance Minister as Council for South Crisis Deepens Karam: Our Support to the Military Institution is Absolute LBC Speaks of Intentional Sabotage, Lebanese Forces Reply Bishop Matar: National Unity is Only Way to Protect Lebanon Kanaan Warns Jumblat: 'Army is Red Line' Abu Faour: Pulling Out of Defense Strategy Committee Not Directed Against President or Dialogue Lebanon to Become Non-Permanent U.N. Security Council Member Suleiman Launches Gulf Tour, Hoping for UAE Helicopter Donation Bassil Warns of Blood for Elections Geagea Backs Jumblat Jumblat Rejects Defense Strategy Counterfeit Party Zahra Hammers Karami Over Patriarch Berri Warns Against Sectarian Splits Khamenei: Hamas and Hizbullah Spread the Islamic Revolution's Principles Sfeir Hopes for Civilized Manners Until Elections Suleiman to 'Brotherhood Ship' Crew: You Represent an Example of Arab Solidarity Hariri Ready for Challenges and Difficulties Sfeir: If Power Shifts to March 8 Forces There Would Be Historic Mistakes Chamoun: We Either Win the Elections or Defeat Would be Lethal Harb Launches Election Campaign Wahab Waves Stick Karami Criticizes Politicized Clergy, Supports Army Geagea: March 8 Using Threat Logic after Losing Hope of Winning Elections 30,000 Immigrants Expected to Vote in Lebanon Elections Israel Continues to Seize Lebanese Aid Ship Lebanon Advised to 'Wait' Before Accepting MiGs amid Reports Russian Warplanes 'Unsafe' Report: Mugniyah's Israeli Killers Infiltrated to Syria from 'Kurdistan'